

Product Development Approaches

Although **Arizona Origins** will provide a wide range of new marketing and promotional opportunities, strategic destinations will recognize that to fully maximize their potential, proactive steps to link, enhance or develop geotourism related assets must also be considered. As previous discussions of geotourism principals note, long-term sustainability must lie at the heart of these product development efforts. Too often, destinations look solely to the concept of “create” when discussions of proactive product development occur. For many, the “enhance” or “link” approaches hold much greater potential than given capital and staffing realities.

Proactive Product Development Process

Before moving forward in proactive product development efforts, destinations should undertake a process, like the one noted below, to help understand the range of opportunities, consider development and community factors and prioritize options for playing a role of a destination architect.

1. Inventory Geotourism asset base

Identify geotourism related assets both in the destination's immediate area, as well as in areas of close proximity.

2. Categorize by Geotourism type

Categorize products into one of seven geotourism segments – Archaeological Site, Festival, Historical Site, Mission, Museum, Natural or Scenic Area, or Other Point of Interest. Look for prospective areas of concentration or potentially more important – logical gaps.

3. Evaluate product drawing attraction potential – current and potential

Is the product a Destination Driver, a Driver Accelerant, or a Dependent Amenity? Drivers can truly stimulate a prospective visitor's travel decision, accelerants increase the potential of a travel decision but are not as powerful as drivers, and dependent amenities are products that travelers will visit once there, but rarely are important in the fundamental travel decision. Consider the products current drawing power, as well as its future potential if linked, enhanced or developed more fully.

4. Identify community and sustainability issues

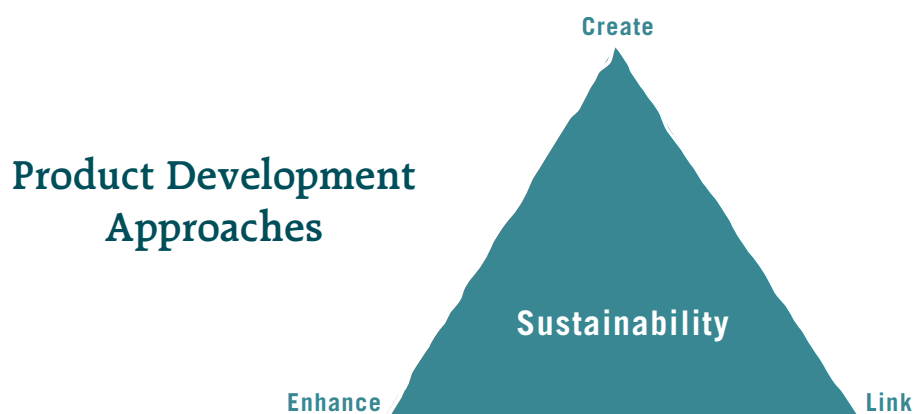
Specifically consider community interest and concerns related to the various products. Additionally, look to access and carrying capacity factors related to the product, as well as other sustainability related concerns.

5. Prioritize product development opportunities

Based on the previous steps, prioritize product development opportunities that hold the greatest potential to enhance the overall destination. This prioritization should also consider those opportunities that can build a competitive advantage for the destination and fit with other community goals.

6. Take proactive steps to be a destination architect

Play one of a number of roles, including being a facilitator, a supporter, an advisor, an investor or an operator.



Arizona Origins – Near and Longer Range Goals

As previously noted, Arizona is a Geotourism dependent state. Many of the state's most important destination assets can be maximized by recognizing and embracing Geotourism principals. In the near term, **Arizona Origins** and the Arizona-Sonora Desert MapGuide provide important new tools to build awareness and understanding of these special assets. Additionally, it has provided a powerful partner in National Geographic and its Center for Sustainable Destinations.

These efforts have also provided an expanded opportunity to link and embrace similar geotourism assets further south in the state of Sonora, Mexico. Through the help and assistance of the Arizona-Mexico Commission, coordination between the two states on the MapGuide effort has been maximized. Further coordination will continue in order to fully capitalize on the combined power and allure of many of these Geotourism themes.

It is important to recognize that **Arizona Origins** and its application of Geotourism principals is not just a short term marketing campaign. Rather, over the longer term, it will help reinforce the identity of Arizona as a unique Geotourism destination and provide proactive direction to ensure these special assets are embraced and nurtured in ways that ensure their long-term sustainability. While the initial efforts have focused on the mid and southern regions of the state, future applications will be expanded to all regions of Arizona.

The following organizations have been critical in moving these initiatives forward and should be recognized for their close engagement and participation.

- [National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations](#)
- [Arizona-Mexico Commission](#)
- [Bureau of Land Management](#)
- [Arizona Office of Tourism](#)
- [Sonora Tourism Commission](#)
- [Sonoran Institute](#)
- [Nichols Tourism Group](#)

The Arizona Geotourism Council has also provided important direction and oversight in the development of the MapGuide and their time and energies have been much appreciated.

GEOTOURISM COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Tina Clarke – Archeologist/Historian, Yuma Heritage Crossing (& City Historian)
2. Felipe Garcia – VP of Community Affairs & Cultural Tourism, Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau
3. Kay Daggett – Director, Sierra Vista Convention and Visitors Bureau
4. Dr. Kathleen Andereck – Associate Professor, ASU West, Recreation & Tourism Management (Phoenix)
5. Robin Fohrenkam – Economic Development Dept, Gila River Indian Community (Sacaton)
6. Roger Lidman – Director, Pueblo Grande Museum & Archaeological Park (Phoenix) - Board of Directors with AZ Tourism Alliance
7. Russel Tronstad – U of A Cooperative Extension, Dept of Agriculture & Economic Resource
8. Sheldon Miller – Exec Director, Graham County Chamber of Commerce (Safford)
9. Lisa Harrison – President/CEO, Tubac-Santa Cruz Visitors Center